AN EPISTLE TO All that profess the Light of Jesus Christ WITHIN To be their Guide.

BY

JOHN CROOK.

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To all that Profeſs the Light of Jeſus Chriſt (within) to be their Guide, Greeting.

Dear Friends, Brethren, and Siſters,

THat believe in the inward, and ſpiritual Grace, which is *the Light* of our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, I ſalute you all, deſiring, that as we *received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, we may all [ſo] walk in him.* In order hereunto let us all watch, and be mindful how we received the truth at the beginning, which is the ſubject matter upon my heart, by this Epiſtle to ſignifie unto you.

For you know, many of us before we received the *Truth* (*as it is in Jeſus*) felt ſome ſtirrings of life, and therefore ſeparated in our Judgments, and Opinions from the generality of our Neighbors, and Country men where we dwelt: becauſe of an inward *cry* from a deep want in our Souls, and hungering after the conſtant enjoyment of [that] which [we] with many others profeſſed; but could not find in any thing *under the Sun.*

So poor and needy were we, that the dealings of *God* with our ſpirits in that day, in ſome ſenſe may be ſaid to reſemble Gods proceedings with *Adam*, when he ſet all the creatures before him, before he gave him a meet-helper, that when he ſaw he could find out no fit helper for himſelf amongſt them all, he might make the more account of the *meet helper* that was [after] given him of *God.*

So it was inwardly with us, until that *Trumpet* ſounded which directed our minds to the light of *Chriſt Jeſus* in our own hearts and Conſciences, which when we believed the *report*, and made tryal of its *ſufficiency*, we ſoon found the

meet-helper for our ſouls (to wit) the *arm of the Lord to be revealed* in [it] and made [ſo] *bare*, that we knew it to be the *Lords own arm*, which brought deliverance to us.

But not from all our enemies at once, yet [ſo] that we underſtood plainly, (by certain experience) that the tendency thereof, and the end of its being made *bare*, was in order to deliver *us out of the hands of* [*all*] *our enemies*; *that being delivered, we might ſerve God without a tormenting, diſtruſtful fear in holineſs, and righteouſneſs before* [*him*] *all the days of our lives.*

And the way thereunto, was by the working of this *arm* of power in our inward parts, to make a ſeparation [within] between the precious and the vile within, and between our own ſpirits, and *Gods Spirit*; between our own wills, and *Gods will*; between our own thoughts, and *Gods thoughts*; and our own ways, and *Gods ways*, &c.

So that we found the great buſineſs of *regeneration and reſtauration* was to be wrought [within us;] and what ſorrow, what trouble, what horror, what diſtreſs, *what Warrs, and rumor of warrs*, was [within us] many knows; and what *earthquakes* was in divers hearts (which might occaſion the name QUAKER to be given to ſome of us) thoſe that were *eye-witneſſes from the* beginning are not ignorant of theſe things.

O what carefulneſs, what watchfulneſs, what circumſpection, what awfulneſs of God, and what dread of his power was upon our ſpirits, leſt we ſhould ſpeak our own words, work our own works, walk in our [own] ways, or think our [own] thoughts; ſo diligently did we keep a watching, and over our own hearts, being conſcious to our ſelves, that we ſhould give an account for every idle word, which cauſed us to learn *a bridle for our tongues, that our words might be few, and ſavory, miniſtring grace to the hearers.*

How ſolid were our looks? how grave were our countenances, how ſerious were our carriages? and how exemplary our behaviours, and converſations amongſt all that we converſed with? leſt we ſhould give occaſion for any to ſpeak evil of the bleſſed truth of the Living God.

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And if any, though but newly convinced thereof, walked disorderly, or that took up their *rest* in a [bare] convincement, and came not to be converted to *the life, and power of God* in their own particular (which at the beginning was soon discovered by *that spirit of discerning* which in the *light* we received from *God*

How conscienciously solicitous were we, to admonish, instruct, advise and counsel them to take heed of a false *rest*, or running into, or doing any thing by [bare] imitation from others: Yet how tender were we, of bruising, hurting, stopping, or hindering any stirrings of *light and life*, lest *the lame should be turned out of the way*, or the feeble be left behind.

The spirit of Holy *David* was in our hearts, who would not consent that *the sore, and weary ones* (*that could not get over the River* Bezor, *should lose their part of the prey, because they tarried with the stuff*; but made it a *Law, and a Statute in Israel for ever, that they should have part alike.*

And how did we love, and pity those, that took pleasure in the *stones of* Zion, *and favoured the dust thereof?* what carefulness was upon us for them; and if we found any but like the *young man* (in *Mark* 19. 22) that had been religiously inclined from their *youth*, how did we love them? watching for opportunities to communicate some spiritual advice unto them.

As if the new *kindred that Christ* speaks of, *Mat.* 12. (to wit) *Whosoever shall do my Fathers will* (*the same is my Mother, Sister, and Brother*) was now discovered again, and the *beauties of holiness* were now made manifest, with the many glorious priviledges enjoyed thereby; as to see clearly, and know certainly the *living God*; for hereby came we *to know* [*that we knew him*] because of the *beauties of holiness*, in keeping close to [his *Commandments*] whereby our love to God, and one to another was manifest unto all.

For we durst not let in distrustful thoughts of *God*, nor one of another, Faith in him [then] becoming our *Law*; so that our care was stedfastly, and constantly to believe in the *light*, by which we had seen *him*, and to dwell in a holy fear, lest

we ſhould tranſgreſs *the Law of Faith*, by which *Chriſt was [then] kept dwelling in our hearts*, and all *boaſting* of SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS was utterly *excluded*.

But with how much difficulty we kept [that] Faith, you only know, who like valiant Souldiers have *endured hardſhip in the good fight of Faith*, whereby we our ſelves were preſerved, and *kept by the power of God through Faith*, that we might (in due time) *receive the end of our Faith* (for we had nothing elſe in our eye, but to be ſaved from *ſin*) [to wit] *the ſalvation of our ſouls*.

And then, becauſe we believed *in the power*, as we were moved of [it] we ſpake by [it] and [ſuch words] like *Jonathans bow, never returned empty*, but wounded the *Hypocrites*; like the *man that ſhot the arrow out of ſimplicity*, which ſmote *diſguiſed Ahab between the harneſs*; ſo that he *died according to the word of the Lord by* Micaiah.

You may remember alſo, how like *Ephraim* (at firſt) we were *as little children, and ſpake trembling*; ſaying often in our hearts, as *Jacob* did of the *Mountain* where *God* appeared (to wit) *how dreadful is this place*, and [then] how quick, and powerful were [thoſe words] that proceeded from that *dread of God* in our hearts

The great *myſtery* of the *falſe Prophet*, that rides upon the Beaſt, being [then] inwardly diſcovered, with the *myſtery of his name, and number thereof* (to wit) *the number of a man*; which cauſed us at the *beginning* ſo to cry down vain, corrupt man, both in our ſelves, and others; feeling that [*God*] was riſen in [his] *power, to confound its wiſdom*, and to bring his *fleſhly prudence and policy to nothing*: therefore we feared the getting up of that *mans-part* in our ſelves, being ſo battered by the inward *judgments of God* upon our ſelves.

That with good *Jehoſaphat* we ſaid in our hearts, *we know not what to do, but our eyes are towards thee, O God*; then in this *valley* of helpleſneſs, ſtraights, poverty, lowlineſs, and humility, God pleaded with our *fleſhly part*; ſo that in the day of our diſtreſs, although we multiplied our ſervices, and *doubled* our offerings and obſervations, to obtain relief; yet

Chriſt

Christ refused all these our works, that he might [freely] make himself known unto us (which in due time he did) as *Joseph unto his brethren* (and saith that *Scripture*) *there stood no man with him, when he made himself known unto them*; to the exalting of the *riches of the glory of his grace* [in us] whereby sorrow fled away, and our own mournful spirits were now made *to rejoyce in God*, and our formerly troubled souls began now *to magnifie our Saviour*.

Thus *former things passed away*, till the tempestuous *Sea* was no more; but joy and gladness was in our dwellings, and the voice of melody in all our *hearts*, and in the midst of all our *Assemblies*.

But before we came hither, you know (fellow Travellers) that *Mount Sinai* was first in our way, where we tarried a while, and felt the entertainment of her flames, and heard *the voice of words, and the sound of her trumpets*, and were witnesses of her terrible *earth-quakes* [yet fled not] but with *Moses*, a remnant *drew near unto the thick darkness where God was*: but others made this *Mountain* the end of their journy, escaping with their *lives* still in their own doings: yet these, though they might in Profession come out with us, thus far they were not of us, and (in time) will go out from us, that it may appear they came not through [all] *the tribulations* that a remnant went through.

For from thence a remnant came unto the ministration of *the Prophets*, where they met with openings, and *propheſies* of good things [yet] to come, before they did come: and here others fled as on the *Sabbath day*, as if [now] all labour was at an end, and here they took up their rest, (but *God* did not *sanctifie it*) and therefore glorying and pride got up in these; Boasting in the *GIFTED-MAN*, soon forgetting all *dependance* upon the opener, *viz. the spirit of truth*, to exercise their hearts and tongues in the mannagement of all, for the glory of God, and refreshment of his own *seed* in the hearts of his people.

But a remnant still travelled on, through *John Baptists cry in the wilderness* (*make straight the way of the Lord*) and come

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to repentance for all their dead words, and works, *that every valley might be filled, and every mountain, and hill brought low. and the crooked made ſtraight, and the rough ways made ſmooth*; then came we to ſee the *ſalvation of God* (to wit) the *Lamb of God that takes away the ſins of the world*, whom then we followed, leaving [*John*] as ſome of his [own] *diſciples* did.

Some alſo came with us as far as *Johns Baptiſm that waſheth away the filth of the fleſh*; but not coming to the *Baptiſm of Chriſt, which waſheth all filthineſs both of fleſh and ſpirit*; alſo they left us at *John*: ſuch as theſe may be compared to the *King of Iſrael, who at the command of the Prophet ſmote the ground often; but not ſmiting it long enough* (until the enemy was conſumed) he miſſed of *a perfect victory, and full conqueſt*: ſo do all that take up their *reſt* in any thing ſhort *of the Lamb of God.*

Theſe things being thus witneſſed in the ſpiritual travels of a remnant at the *beginning*, let us all ſearch and try our ways, whether we be ſtill *following the ancient foot-ſteps of the flocks of the companions*, by keeping in the pure ſeparation from the fleſhly part in our ſelves, miniſtring [only] from *the ability that God gives*, which a remnant that have kept to their firſt love, and their garments clean therein, have done to the praiſe of the Lord God Almighty for ever.

My exhortation therefore is unto all, but more eſpecially to you that are Children of believing Parents, and Servants to believing Maſters, with all the younger men, and younger women convinced in theſe later times (knowing that a remnant of theſe alſo have kept their garments clean) to *examine your ſelves* how you came by your Profeſſion? whether you that are Children, and Servants, received it by tradition, only becauſe of your outward Relations. *&c.* or from the inward work of God upon your own ſpirits, as thoſe did that received the truth (*in the love of God*) at the beginning.

For many may endure *ſufferings*, and undergo the *reproach* of a *QUAKER*, and all for ſiniſter ends; as the *Shechemites endured the pain of Circumciſion to obtain* Dinah, Jacobs *Daughter*, and to accompliſh their other ends, and intereſts: on

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these terms they were willing to be *one people with the Israelites*; as too many on like conditions at this day may be willing to be called QUAKERS; to whom I say, as *Jacob* did to *Simeon* and *Levi*, *you have troubled us*, and (as much as in you lies) *have made the truth to stink amongst the inhabitants of the Land*; (yet a remnant dare not do so, blessed be the Lord.)

But to you that are *grieved, and troubled*, because of these *Shechemites*, I say to you also, as the *Lord* on this occasion said unto *troubled Jacob*, *Arise, let* [*us*] *go up to Bethel* (the house of God) *and dwell there*, *Gen.* 35. (where no *Shechemites* can come.)

O the bemoanings of many tender souls [at the beginning] for the loss of their conditions, sometimes through their own negligence, and sometimes through the enemies subtilty (*weeping like* Rachel *for her children, and refusing to be comforted, because they were not*) are fresh in my remembrance.

But of later times many come amongst us, that in outward appearance may seem to be of us, who as yet never truly knew the meaning of such *bemoanings*, nor the bitterness of *Rachels* tears, but walk as if the *gate* of entrance into *the truth*, was grown wider, and the *path, and way thereof, broader* than [it] was at the *beginning*; for how careful were those that came to witness the [truth] at the beginning to keep *low, and humble*, that they might not be drawn from their *own measures*, lest their [own] words should become their burden, and they be condemned in themselves, for uttering that (as *in the name of God*) which came not from the *Spirit of the living God.*

Therefore it was that *so mightily grew the word of God, and prospered* (bringing all down *to the loathing of their persons* in true *humility*) growing up in every honest heart, that *the fruits of the Spirit were manifest, as in the Apostles days* (*to wit*) *love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance*; *against such there is no law, saith the Apostle*: *and they that are Christs have crucified the flesh, with the affections, and lusts. If we live in the spirit, let us all so walk in the*

spirit,

ſpirit, let us not be deſirous (ſaith the Apoſtle) of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another, &c.

But like Brethren (ſaith the ſame Apoſtle) if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are ſpiritual, reſtore ſuch an one in the ſpirit of meekneſs, conſidering thy ſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted, bear ye one anothers burdens, and ſo fulfil the Law of Chriſt.

My heart is overcome when I take a view of Gods dealings with us from the day that he firſt viſited us unto this preſent time; *My dear friends and brethren*, you know how *Chriſt (our Joſeph) knew us when we knew not him, and made himſelf known to us (as Joſeph did unto his brethren)* while guilt, and fear; diſtruſt, and horror was in their ſpirits, and then commanded, that they ſhould do unto, and one for another, as he had done unto, and for them all.

Therefore let all come down to the remembrancer, the Spirit of Truth, which will diſtinguiſh between thoſe that are now arrayed with the *beautiful garments of their youthful days, viz.* humility, meekneſs, righteouſneſs, and the true zeal of the Lord and thoſe that have only a ſhew of it; and there le t [us] behold one another in our comely attire, as with the lovely *Coat of Joſeph* upon our backs, and the glorious *viſions of the Almighty* in our hearts, judging down all ſtirrings of *envyings, and evil ſurmiſings* againſt any; knowing right well that all ſuch *lowings, and bleatings* are commanded to be ſlain: for can we conſider the *price* we coſt at *firſt*, and the love, care, and watchfulneſs of our *God* over us unto this day, of whom a remnant can ſay (as *Jacob* did) (*he hath fed us all our life long*) and not be in love one with another.

Can we contemplate of the *miſeries* we have been delivered from, and the *mercies* we have been made partakers of ſince we were a people, and not be *humbled* before our *God*, for any unthankfulneſs and diſtruſt: Can we view the *priſons*, and *dungeons*, the *baniſhments*, and all *outward loſſes and ſpoiling of our goods*, with the *reproachful ſcoffs, and ſcornful ſlightings*, by ſuch, that ſome could ſay (with holy *Job*) *they were not worthy to eat with the dogs of their flocks*, and not be melted

ted before the *Lord*, and abaſed as *unworthy* of the leaſt of all his *mercies*.

And can we remember our bleſſed ſupport under all thoſe *ſufferings*, and the ſweet *preſence of the Spirit of Chriſt* in our hearts, ſaying in us under all theſe *tryals and exerciſes*, as the *Diſciples* did, when they returned to Chriſt their Maſter, after their *weary travels* (to wit) *we wanted nothing*, &c. we *wanted* no *perfumes* to take away the *noiſome ſmells*, we *wanted* nothing to make our *hard lodging eaſie*, we *wanted no pleaſant walks* to make *our ſtrait confinements joyous*, nor we *wanted not the ſociety* of outward *relations*, *and former acquaintance, to paſs away the time*, becauſe the *Lord our God* turned all our *hardſhips* into *unſpeakable* comfort, and true *contentment*.

And ſhall any now ſay, Gods *arm is ſhortned that he cannot ſave, or his ear is heavy that he cannot hear? God forbid*, that all the *milk, and wine, and honey*, and other *fat things* (with which we have been often *ſpiritually feaſted at Gods table*) ſhould be all forgotten and buried in the *Wilderneſs*, ſaying in our ſelves as rebellious *Iſrael* did of old (to wit) *can he now prepare ſuch a table in the Wilderneſs for us?*

But rather let us with *Manoah*'s Wife, the Mother of *Sampſon*, conclude, *If the Lord were pleaſed to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering, and a meat offering at our hands; neither would he have ſhewed us all theſe things*, and done ſo much for us as he hath done from the very beginning, that we were a people unto this day.

Therefore lift up your heads you *valliants of Iſrael*, that have come through the *dark-burning-Mountain*, and through the pleaſant and delightful *Openings, and Prophſies*, through, and beyond all outward *waſhings*, unto the *Lamb of God*, that *your robes may be waſhed white in his Blood*, that thereby you may *overcome*, and then ſit down in that *Kingdom which cannot be ſhaken*, with weary *Abraham*, throughly-tired *Iſaac*, and wreſtling *Jacob*.

O how glorious are you [all] in the ſight of God, and all his people, even as an *Army terrible with banners* in the ſight of all adverſaries; therefore keep your *ranks*, and march on

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in your *heavenly way*, which the *Lord of Hosts himself hath set you in*, and *Babylon* the [great] shall fall before you, more and more, for the *Lord of Hosts* hath spoken it; and you with all the holy *Martyrs* of *Jesus* shall rejoyce over her down-fal for ever.

These few words further and again, springs up in my heart to you all dear Friends, Brethren, and Sisters, (to wit) that we may be always mindful how we received the truth at the beginning, and be careful that we travel on with our *feet* always *shod* with the same *humily*, and *poverty of spirit* [as] when we were first *shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace*.

Never forgetting, nor changing the *poor mans food* (to wit) our old *water* and *pulse*, for any *portion* of the *rich mans dainties*, but still waiting on God, that in due season gives both milk to babes, and strong meat to them of riper age; bearing in our remembrance the great execution that was done at the beginning, by the smooth stones out of the poor Shepherds bag.

Now to the pure harmless seed (that cries in our hearts) I commend you all, that therein (as in the *cleft* of [that] *Rock*) against which the gates of Hell shall never prevail) we all may dwell and abide for ever; so shall the work of the Lord prosper to his own Glory, and all our comforts for ever. *Amen*,

The 17th. of the.
6th. Month, 1678.

John Crook.

THE END.